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But The Trips Aren't Necessary

Bay Of Pigs, Revisited

CPYRGHT

THERE was never any promise of a United States air cover for the Bay of Pigs invasion of April, 1961. It couldn't have succeeded, anyway, with a force of only 1,500 Cuban invaders, even though the whole operation was "war-planned at the Pentagon."

This is the story behind the ill-fated event of nearly two years ago as it was told to our David Kraslow by Atty. Gen. Robert Kennedy.

It purports to clear the air of charges that President Kennedy, perhaps influenced by United Nations Ambassador Adlai Stevenson, withheld from the Cubans the aid they needed to establish a beachhead.

It refutes the notion that U.S. armed might stood at the ready, where it was meant to stand, but never was called. That such standby aid did exist has been alleged by Bay of Pigs veterans, including one who is quoted in the current edition of a newsletter published by the Republican Congressional Committee.

According to Manuel Penabaz, "We were promised the support of the armed forces of the United States. Over you will

be air cover,' we were told, 'and back of you the Navy and land forces of the United States and other free nations of the Americas.'"

The source of publication is partisan and therefore suspect. Yet it is no less partisan than the attorney general, who wants to set the record straight.

In our opinion there were too few troops and there was inadequate air cover. Even so, you cannot "invade" by air alone. The full story someday may say that this undermanned force was mounted because intelligence erroneously believed there would be wholesale uprisings within Cuba in support of the invading force. In no other manner could 1,500 men take on 300,000.

Yet there's no profit and some harm in continuing to cry over split milk.

It has always been perfectly clear who organized, supported and directed the invasion. Taking continued blame for the fiasco has only the virtue of reiterating one's responsibility for a success which it is hoped may be yet to come.

The Bay of Pigs is behind us, and it is a sorry recollection that cannot be rationalized. What is before us?